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ABSTRACT

This report presents a framework to help educators improve teacher training in family involvement. Information comes from the Harvard Family Research Project, which documented the nature and scope of preservice education in family involvement. Researchers reviewed state teacher certification requirements, surveyed courses and requirements at accredited institutions, and examined successful models of preservice training in family involvement. Section 1 of this report describes teacher preparation in family involvement, explaining that the best educational results occur when schools, families, and communities collaborate. Section 2 examines the status of teacher preparation in family involvement, noting that state certification does not encourage study of the subject. Section 3 describes new skills for new schools, illustrating types of training for family involvement (general family involvement, general family knowledge, home-school communication, family involvement in learning activities, families supporting schools, schools supporting families, and families as change agents). Examples from various universities are presented. Section 4 discusses the universities' successful methods of preparing teachers for family involvement (e.g., guest speakers, role-play, case method, cultural immersion, community experiences, research with families and communities, self-reflection, and interprofessional education). Section 5 presents recommendations regarding ways that educators, policy makers, and professional organizations can ensure that teachers are prepared to involve families and communities. An appendix describes the research methodology. (Contains 108 references). (SM)

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New Skills for New Schools:

Preparing Teachers in Family Involvement

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NEW SKILLS FOR NEW SCHOOLS:

Preparing Teachers in Family Involvement

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1997

HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT
Harvard Graduate School of Education
Cambridge, MA

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THE SECRETARY

Dear Colleague:

Many schools throughout the country are working to increase family involvement in children's learning. They are encouraging not only better parent-school communication, but they are also doing a better job of developing more wide-ranging family, school, and community partnerships. These partnerships include family literacy programs, school-based family support programs, and collaborations focused on school improvement. These efforts are to be commended: thirty years of research has shown that family involvement has positive effects on children's academic achievement and school completion rates. That's why I established the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education in 1994. Today, with more than 3,000 members, it seeks to build local partnerships to improve children's learning and to make schools better.

School success in promoting family involvement greatly depends on teachers and principals who possess the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to work with families. Teacher preparation programs, however, have often not kept pace with school efforts to increase family involvement. This report from the Harvard Family Research Project, *New Skills for New Schools*, makes a convincing argument about why finding promising ways to prepare teachers to involve families in education is critical and how this can be accomplished.

New Skills for New Schools provides a comprehensive training framework to guide educators in their efforts to improve teacher training in the critical area of family involvement. Teacher educators will find many stimulating and practical illustrations of this framework as applied by a number of American colleges and universities. These examples highlight a range of instructional methods to help student teachers develop communication, problem-solving, and collaboration skills. They also illustrate the opportunities to develop hands-on training with families, schools, and community institutions. The report's recommendations lay out the steps that educators, policymakers, and professional organizations can take to ensure that all of America's new teachers are prepared to build partnerships with families and communities to promote children's school success.

To begin a broad national dialogue, the U.S. Department of Education, the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, the Office of the Vice President, Bank Street College, Teachers College, the University of Minnesota, and Peabody University are hosting a teleconference devoted to teacher training for family involvement. The teleconference provides an opportunity for educators throughout the nation to discuss and add to the ideas and recommendations from this report and to formulate an action agenda. It is my earnest hope that you will join me in using this report and the teleconference as a catalyst to advance teacher preparation for family involvement. Call 1-800-USA-LEARN for more information on the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education and the teacher preparation in family involvement teleconference.

Yours sincerely,

Richard W. Riley

600 INDEPENDENCE AVE., S.W. WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202-0100

Our mission is to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the Nation.

PREFACE

"...every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional and academic growth of children." (GOALS 2000: Educate America Act)

PTA members across the country tirelessly urged their representatives in Congress to adopt this goal as part of the national vision for education in America. Congress responded in 1994 by formalizing parent and family involvement, and by recognizing this goal as a vital part of our national education reform.

But simply recognizing the importance of parent and family involvement as stated in the national goals is not enough. Researchers at the Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) have collected data to determine not only *why* training teachers to work successfully with families is so critical, but also *how* to train teachers to work in partnership with parents and families. This timely report helps to integrate the parent involvement goal with another of these important National Education Goals:

"...the nation's teaching force will have access to programs for continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century."

At this critical period for school reform and education issues, the HFRP report holds special relevance. In addition to identifying the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for teachers to prepare for family involvement, the findings confirm three needs of teachers: (1) more direct experiences with families and communities, (2) support in making school conditions conducive to family involvement, and (3) opportunities to share successful experiences and outcomes with their colleagues.

National PTA's own efforts in partnership with the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) on behalf of training preservice teachers echo this report in affirming that preservice education is only a beginning. Professional development opportunities for teachers in parent and family involvement must be ongoing to expand educators' abilities to reach out to schools, parents, and communities.

New skills are indeed needed for schools of the 21st century. The examples highlighted in this report encourage us to continue our efforts

together in preparing teachers for family involvement at every level. I challenge you to join with parents and teachers everywhere on behalf of today's students and those of tomorrow.

Lois Jean White, President

National PTA

NEW SKILLS FOR NEW SCHOOLS: PREPARING TEACHERS IN FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

OVERVIEW

Recent educational reform by the U.S. Department of Education, such as GOALS 2000, stresses parental participation in children's schooling as a primary goal. Many other educational reforms and policies — from site-based management to family support initiatives — emphasize building relationships among families, schools, and communities to promote children's academic success. The priority of family involvement grows out of convincing evidence of the strong contributions that families make to student achievement and school quality.

School efforts to promote family involvement in children's education will succeed only if teachers are adequately prepared to support these efforts. The high standards of professional development that policymakers espouse for teachers of core academic subjects applies equally to partnerships for family involvement. Teachers — from prekindergarten to secondary school — need skills to create the positive family partnerships that result in student success and improved schools.

Teacher preparation in family involvement lags far behind school efforts to promote family involvement, however. In 1992, the initial research for this report found that teacher certification requirements in the majority of states did not mention family involvement. States whose certification requirements did allude to family involvement, however, often defined family involvement in vague terms. Likewise, most teacher education programs did not offer substantial training in family involvement. Training that was conducted was often limited in scope of content and teaching methods. Thus, a serious discrepancy existed between preservice preparation and the types of family involvement activities that teachers were increasingly being expected to perform in schools.

Subsequent research identified the new knowledge and skills that teachers needed in order to work effectively with families. These ranged from a basic understanding of the benefits of and barriers to family involvement,

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to more specialized skills related to enhancing parent participation in governance roles. A framework of content areas for teacher preparation includes the following: (1) general family involvement, (2) general family knowledge, (3) home-school communication, (4) family involvement in learning activities, (5) families supporting schools, (6) schools supporting families, and (7) families as change agents. This framework also recognizes that schools need to reinforce teacher preparation in family involvement. Teachers are likely to apply their skills in schools that promote broad family involvement policies.

The research further revealed that, while the overall picture of teacher preparation in family involvement was dismal, isolated but promising teacher education programs did exist. These programs offered many courses covering a broad range of content areas. They also exposed students to hands-on experiences working with families.

Several recommendations have emerged from the research. The field needs a national network that supports model development, provides technical assistance, and serves as a clearinghouse for information. Research and evaluation on the effectiveness of programs that prepare teachers to work with families will also benefit the field, as will policy guidelines that offer clearer and more comprehensive definitions of family involvement. Also, efforts should be made to encourage family involvement training for teachers who will be working at all grade levels. Furthermore, the support of professional organizations can be crucial for preparing teachers, by giving legitimacy to the relatively new field of family involvement in children's education. In addition to preservice education, the provision of inservice training for teachers will increase the likelihood that they will employ on a widespread basis their newly-acquired skills in working with families. Finally, teaching and learning should move beyond traditional methods toward experiential methods that are more likely to equip teachers with the problem-solving, communication, and collaboration skills needed to create meaningful relationships with students and families.

I. THE CASE FOR TEACHER PREPARATION IN FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Schools cannot work successfully in isolation from students' families and communities. Policymakers who formulated the national educational goals in 1990 recognized this inescapable fact and made family involvement in children's learning a priority area for program development. This interest in family involvement has continued. Under the leadership of Richard W. Riley, U.S. Secretary of Education, a Partnership of Family Involvement in Education has been created. The Partnership is composed of more than 700 family, school, community, employer, and religious groups who work together to promote children's learning.

Family involvement initiatives require schools of education to reexamine the skills and knowledge that teachers will need in order to work effectively in the schools of the future. Secretary Riley summarizes a new direction in teacher preparation:

> Teachers must also learn new ways to involve parents in the learning process. Thirty years of research tells us that the starting point of putting children on the road to excellence is parental involvement in their children's education. (U.S. Department of Education, 1996)

Professional teacher organizations recognize the need for teachers to develop skills to involve families in their children's learning. For example, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) includes family involvement as a separate standard as well as a theme integrated into other standards for its professional teaching certificates (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1993). Whereas the 1990 edition of the *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* did not have any index entries about families, parents, or family involvement, the 1996 edition examines family, community, and school collaboration. Also, a new initiative by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and the National PTA aims to provide preservice and inservice teacher training in parent and family involvement.

While policymakers and educators endorse professional development, little is known about preparing student teachers to work with families. If

teachers are to link learning in the classroom and in the home, how are they being prepared to accomplish this task? What knowledge and skills do they need? How should these be taught and learned?

The Harvard Family Research Project began a study in 1991 to seek the answers to these questions by documenting the nature and scope of preservice teacher education in family involvement in children's learning. The research strategy consisted of three components: (1) a review of state teacher certification requirements to determine what states required in terms of coursework or work experience in family involvement; (2) a survey of course offerings and requirements by accredited teacher training institutions in order to establish a framework of content areas; and (3) an in-depth examination of promising and replicable models of preservice training in family involvement, with an emphasis on content and delivery (see Appendix for research methods).

If teachers are to link learning in the classroom and in the home, how are they being prepared to accomplish this task? What knowledge and skills do they need? How should these be taught and learned?

The findings in this report can be implemented in three ways. They can be used to inform policymakers about trends and issues in the field in order to help influence policies that shape the future of professional development. Second, the findings offer educators a framework for designing training programs in family involvement. The report extends the knowledge base of content areas and teaching methods that will develop the attitudes, knowledge, and skills teachers need to work effectively with families. It also identifies the challenges to making family involvement an integral part of teacher preparation and the ways in which they can be overcome. Finally, the findings can serve as a source of ideas for schools and school districts. The report offers models of school collaborations with teacher training institutions, which can be developed even further for inservice and preservice training in family involvement.

The report begins with a discussion of the importance of family involvement in children's schooling and the need to prepare teachers to promote this involvement. It then examines the status of teacher preparation, providing analyses of state certification requirements and teacher education programs. A framework for teacher preparation in family involvement highlights content areas and promising training methods. This section is followed by a set of recommendations to advance teacher preparation in family involvement.

Family Involvement: Research, Policy, and Practice

Widespread support for family involvement in education is due in part to compelling research evidence suggesting that family involvement has

positive effects on children's academic achievement. The highly acclaimed book, *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family Is Critical to Student Achievement*, opens by stating, "The evidence is now beyond dispute. When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school, but throughout life" (Henderson & Berla, 1994, p. 1). The book advances six major conclusions:

- The family makes critical contributions to student achievement; efforts to improve children's outcomes are much more effective if the efforts encompass the children's families.
- When parents are involved in their children's learning at school, not just at home, children do better in school and they stay in school longer.
- When parents are involved at school, their children go to better schools.
- Children do best when their parents are enabled to play four key roles in their children's learning: teachers, supporters, advocates, and decision makers.
- A comprehensive, well-planned family-school partnership fosters high student achievement.
- Families, schools, and community organizations all contribute to student achievement; the best results come when all three work together.

Families, schools, and community organizations all contribute to student achievement; the best results come when all three work together.

A number of other studies also reveal that the benefits of family involvement are not restricted to student achievement. One national study, for example, resulted in a guide for successful school-based reform that recommends bringing schools and community members, including parents, together as much as possible in school reform efforts (Quellmalz, Shields, & Knapp, 1995). In Kentucky, which pioneered outcome-based educational accountability, the Pritchard Committee for Educational Excellence provides parents and other citizens information on specific components of school reform and informs them about their roles in implementing the education reform law (Heine, 1992).

Numerous important educational reforms and policies emphasize relationships among families, schools, and communities. Following are examples:

- **Site-based Management.** Some states and districts (e.g., New York State, Massachusetts, and Chicago) are mandating that site-based management plans be developed jointly by parents, community members, teachers, and other school personnel. These changes

require that teachers and administrators view parents as partners in decision making and collaborate with parents in school governance.

- **Public School Choice.** Many local school districts have created policies that give parents the power to decide which public schools their children attend. Under these conditions, administrators and teachers must view parents as consumers and provide them with information about the merits of their respective schools.

- **Family Support Initiatives.** Some states (e.g., Minnesota and Missouri) have initiated statewide, school-based programs for parents of young children. These programs provide families with support and educational services, such as parenting classes, literacy education, and referrals to other agencies. School-based family support programs call for an expanded perspective of education among teachers and school administrators.

- **Federal Programs and Policies.** Federal educational programs and policies specify the involvement of families in children's education. For instance, federal law mandates that parents of special education students be involved in developing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) with teachers and other school and professional personnel. In addition, Title I federal funds, aimed at helping disadvantaged children meet challenging academic standards, require schools to develop effective family involvement programs. School-parent compacts, for example, are written agreements of shared responsibility that must be developed with parents of students participating in such programs. These compacts define school and parent goals for student achievement, outline each stakeholder's role in achieving those goals, and necessitate effective communication skills by school personnel.

- **Service Integration.** A family-centered perspective and increased collaboration between schools and human service agencies are crucial in the move toward service integration. For example, a recent evaluation of the California Healthy Start School-Linked Services Initiative found that when parents were more involved, school-linked services tended to be more accessible, integrated into the life of the school, and more culturally relevant (Golan, S., Wagner, M., Shaver, D., Wechsler, M. & Williamson, C., 1996).

With new research and educational reform policies come new school and teacher practices, as suggested in the above examples. Some of these new school practices reach beyond the classroom. For example, realizing that students' cultural backgrounds, economic conditions, and home

environments can profoundly affect their adjustment to and performance in school, schools are finding that they can best serve the needs of children by becoming more family-centered. Some schools provide nonacademic services to children and their families, while other schools make referrals to outside community agencies that provide such services. That each of these strategies is being employed demonstrates the fact that relationships between home and school are changing in fundamental ways.

Schools are finding that they can best serve the needs of children by becoming more family-centered.

Preservice programs that do not prepare teachers for educational reforms that are taking place can impede the implementation of those reforms. According to the Education Commission of the States (1993), "Elementary and secondary schools struggling to restructure are handicapped with the arrival each year of an estimated 120,000 new teachers who come from teacher education programs that operate aloof from growing public demands for reform." Connecting teacher education to the current initiatives to increase family involvement could help these reforms to be implemented successfully.

The following examples of school-based initiatives to increase family and community involvement in children's education illustrate the changing relationships between home and school:

- In Texas, the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health created and implemented the "School of the Future" project, to fund schools to provide health and human services on site. Two of the project's objectives were to "increase the involvement of parents in the schools" and to "increase...teacher participation in the community" (Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, 1994).

- The James E. Biggs Early Childhood Center in Covington, Kentucky, offers parents multiple services, including a parent center, child care for infants and toddlers, courses in learning how to be a classroom aide, paid stipends for training sessions and classroom service, parenting sessions, GED classes, and employment training workshops (Schultz, Lopez, & Hochberg, 1995).

- In New York City, 37 schools in the Beacons Initiative serve as community centers, with significantly extended hours and numerous programs for youth, parents, and community members. Home/school/community partnerships are a central goal: local community-based organizations run the programs; parents, youth, and other community members volunteer in them; and teachers serve on

community advisory councils and run adult education classes after school (Cahill, Perry, Wright, & Rice, 1993).

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Despite evidence of the positive effects of family involvement, its potential is still largely ignored in schools. Teachers do not systematically encourage family involvement, and parents do not always participate when they are encouraged to do so.

Despite evidence of the positive effects of family involvement, its potential is still largely ignored in schools. Teachers do *not* systematically encourage family involvement, and parents do not always participate when they *are* encouraged to do so. This is especially true at secondary levels (Cohen, 1994), where family involvement is more limited than at early childhood or elementary levels.

Several major barriers to family involvement exist in public schools. First, school environments may discourage family involvement, ". . . due to lack of adequate time and training of teachers and administrators and a predominant institutional culture in the schools that places little value on the views and participation of parents" (National Task Force on School Readiness, 1991, p. 24). The traditional philosophy, still held by many public schools and teachers, concentrates largely on the needs of children, with little regard for their family life and circumstances. This narrow focus may contribute to lower levels of family involvement (Burton, 1992). In addition, large classes may preclude substantial family involvement because teachers have less time to spend with individual students during class time and their family members outside of class. Furthermore, particularly in light of the pressing demands on teachers' time and energy, a lack of administrator support (Swick & McKnight, 1989) may inhibit family involvement because teachers often need incentives such as administration recognition before they will extend themselves to family members.

Second, not all types of family involvement are equally acceptable to both parents and teachers (Krasnow, 1990). Teachers and administrators often are more comfortable with traditional family involvement activities, such as parents' supporting school programs and attending school meetings, while parents are often interested in advocacy and decision making (National PTA, 1997). These different expectations can further inhibit strong home-school partnerships.

A third barrier to family involvement in children's schooling is the negative attitude toward family involvement commonly held by both teachers and parents. Teachers often believe that parents are neither interested in participating in their children's education nor qualified to do so (New Futures Institute, 1989; Fine and Vanderslice, 1990). Parents, in

turn, sometimes feel intimidated by school administrators, staff, and teachers, and feel that they lack the knowledge and skills to help educate their children (Riley, 1994). In much the same way, teachers often lack the confidence to work closely with families, especially if they have not had experience doing so. For example, Epstein (1991) found that although teachers thought that family involvement would improve student achievement, they had reservations about whether they could motivate parents to become more involved.

Fourth, changing demographics and employment patterns may further complicate the development of strong home-school partnerships (Ascher, 1988; Krasnow, 1990; Marburger, 1990). As the population becomes increasingly ethnically diverse, teachers and parents will likely come from different cultural and economic backgrounds, leading at times to contrasting values and beliefs (Murphy, 1991). In addition, the rise in the number of dual-worker families affects overall family involvement in children's education because dual-worker families have less time to spend on school involvement than families in which only one family member works. This factor, combined with teachers' many time-consuming responsibilities that often limit their availability to meet with family members outside of class, can interfere with the development of strong home-school relationships (Swap, 1990).

Finally, a lack of teacher preparation in involving family members in schooling efforts raises another barrier to effective family involvement. Clearly, teachers need concrete skills, knowledge, and positive attitudes about family involvement in order to carry it out effectively (Burton, 1992; Edwards & Jones Young, 1992; Davies, 1991). Despite this fact, however, research has shown that preservice teacher education programs often do not adequately prepare teachers to involve parents (Chavkin, 1991). In a study by Houston and Williamson (1990), beginning elementary teachers related that during their preservice education they had received little or no training in conducting parent conferences or in communicating with or building relations with parents. Other surveys have also shown that teachers feel that they need more instruction in how to work with parents (Bartell, 1992; McAfee, 1987). A recent report by the U.S. Department of Education (1997) found that 48 percent of principals in Title I schools also believe that lack of staff training in how to work with families poses a barrier to family involvement.

Teacher education in family involvement is one of the most potentially effective methods of reducing almost all of these barriers to strong home-school partnerships (Chavkin, 1991). Most teachers become certified through approved teacher education programs (Roth & Pipho, 1990).

Such programs hold the potential for providing student teachers with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to increase family involvement. Making changes at the preservice level would reach the greatest number of future teachers; collectively, they could significantly raise the quality of home-school partnerships.

II. STATUS OF TEACHER PREPARATION IN FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

THE ROLE OF STATE CERTIFICATION

Almost all states develop teacher certification requirements and program approval standards and require graduation from a state-approved program for teaching certification (Clark & McNergney, 1990). The first phase of research reviewed 1992 teacher certification materials from 51 state departments of education (including the District of Columbia) to document the nature and extent of family involvement language in early childhood and K-12 certification.

In general, state certification did not encourage teacher preparation in family involvement, and thus lagged behind reform movements and school practice.

The analysis of the state teacher certification requirements revealed that many states did not mention working with parents or families. Those requirements that did refer to it, rarely defined family involvement in clear, precise terms; phrases such as "parent involvement," "home-school relations," or "working with parents" often appeared with no further explanation. Virtually all state certification that contained family involvement requirements and training occurred at the elementary level (K-6). Of the 22 states that did allude to family involvement in certification requirements, 8 states mentioned family involvement for both early childhood and K-12 certification, 5 states mentioned it for early childhood certification only, and 9 states mentioned family involvement for K-12 certification only (early childhood, n=13; K-12, n=17).

These findings lead to the conclusion that family involvement was not a high priority in state certification. In general, state certification did not encourage teacher preparation in family involvement, and thus lagged behind reform movements and school practice.

Comprehensive teacher certification requirements in California were one exception to this finding. Early childhood teacher certification requirements in California (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 1991) provide a clear and comprehensive definition of family involvement that can guide teacher education programs. In particular, these requirements specify that early education work must include parent involvement, defined as:

- an orientation which includes the family as an integral part of teaching the young child

- an environment which encourages cooperation and collaboration among the children, educators, family, and community
- an understanding of changing family patterns and their societal implications
- knowledge of the home, community, and organization of the school, and a commitment to cooperation and communication among them.

These requirements also outline necessary competencies and experiences in working with families. Each candidate:

- demonstrates a knowledge of cultural differences in children, families, and communities, and prepare appropriate activities; each candidate can develop school-family relations, including communication with parents, parent involvement, and parent education
- completes student teaching which includes experiences in working with parents and families at all levels
- demonstrates a knowledge of parent involvement in school programs — i.e., School Improvement Program (SIP), PTA, and parent volunteers.

THE ROLE OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Despite the potential benefit that teacher education programs hold for increasing the level of family involvement in schools, the research showed that they did not offer substantial preservice preparation in family involvement. The research included a survey of 60 teacher education programs in the 22 states that mentioned family involvement in their certification requirements. The respondents included faculty and directors of family involvement training programs.

Despite the potential benefit that teacher education programs hold for increasing the level of family involvement in schools, the research showed that they did not offer substantial preservice preparation in family involvement.

Family involvement training was often traditional in definition, teaching methods, and delivery. Table 1 lists types and methods of preservice family involvement training. It also notes where in the curriculum such training was offered. The vast majority of courses addressing family involvement dealt with parent-teacher conferences and parents as teachers. Family involvement was most frequently addressed in discussion and in required readings. Also, family involvement training was most often offered as part of a required course and in student teaching. Fewer than half of the programs provided a full course on family involvement.

TABLE 1

Content of Family Involvement Curriculum in Teacher Education Programs

(n=60)

Types Addressed in Courses	%
Parent-teacher conferences	88
Parent teaching child at home	80
Parent as class volunteer	67
Parent as school decision maker	63
Open house events	43
General family involvement*	34
Communicating with parents*	23
Understanding parents/families*	21

Teaching Methods	%
Discussion	92
Required reading	90
Lecture	86
Class assignments	73
Case method	56
Video/multimedia	55
Optional reading	44
Direct work with parents*	23
Guest speakers*	21
Role play*	10

* "other" responses

Where in Curriculum Family Involvement is Taught	%
Part of a required course	83
Student teaching	63
Full required course	37
Field placement	36
Optional course	30
Seminar	25

Teacher education programs, like state certification, lack a comprehensive definition of family involvement. The programs still emphasize the traditional parent-teacher conference over contemporary family involvement activities. Although parent-teacher conferences are important, schools and teachers must recognize that families often need additional assistance and encouragement to help their children in school. This assistance ranges from providing parents with ways to help their children with particular homework assignments, to offering basic parenting education classes and more extensive family support services. Evidence suggests that such assistance may be essential for many minority and low-income parents, in particular, for whom school involvement is often an intimidating and difficult proposition (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990). In order for this type of family involvement to take place, however, teachers and schools must recognize the intrinsic worth of families as contributors to children's learning, and be willing to go beyond the traditional roles of parents and schools.

Teachers and schools must recognize the intrinsic worth of families as contributors to children's learning, and be willing to go beyond the traditional roles of parents and schools.

EARLY CHILDHOOD VERSUS K-12: CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING

Most family involvement language in state certification requirements occurred in early childhood certification, according to the present study. Likewise, among the teacher education programs surveyed, more family involvement training existed at the early childhood level than at all other levels.

A more detailed comparison of family involvement training in early childhood and K-12 programs showed important differences between the two. Early childhood programs had more full required courses addressing family involvement, offered more hours of family involvement training, used "guest speakers" for teaching family involvement more frequently, and had more courses addressing an "understanding of parents" than did K-12 programs.

The quality of family involvement training also appeared to be higher at the early childhood level than at the K-12 levels. Family involvement was integrated into the curriculum of early childhood programs, where it appeared in a variety of courses and field experiences. In addition, innovative methods for teaching family involvement existed in early childhood programs. For example, one early childhood teacher education program had a community service program in which student volunteers provided tutoring, respite care, and child care, and learned how to work directly with families.

EXPANDING PRESERVICE FAMILY INVOLVEMENT TRAINING

Most teacher education programs planned to incorporate training in family involvement (see Table 2). Almost two-thirds of respondents from the teacher education survey planned to increase attention to this area.

When asked why they intended to increase family involvement training, respondents suggested that students, teachers, parents, and the broader community would benefit from increased family involvement in schools. This finding shows that a positive attitude toward family involvement existed, and that preservice education was regarded as important in increasing family involvement: only one program considered preservice education to be ineffective for teaching about family involvement. Furthermore, respondents seemed particularly sensitive to individual and local needs, citing pressure from individuals, schools, and personnel as motivating forces for increasing family involvement training. When asked why they planned *not* to increase family involvement training, on the other hand, other programs often cited the absence of pressure from external groups, such as professional organizations. Some also faulted state departments of education for requiring too much of the curriculum, while restricting the maximum number of course units allowed.

Within teacher education programs, questions must be answered about where family involvement training should be delivered. At present, family involvement is addressed most often as part of a course or in student teaching. Which locations or combinations of locations are most effective for delivering preservice training? Research suggests that family involvement in schools is most effective when it occurs over an extended period and is pursued through several different activities (Henderson, 1987).

Similarly, the Harvard Family Research Project study suggested that family involvement training should be taught on a gradual basis, through a number of methods, and throughout the curricula. For example, several respondents from the survey planned to integrate family involvement into their curricula over a five-year period following the survey rather than create a new course. In addition, more teacher education programs planned to use nontraditional methods, such as the case method, video, and role play, in the five-year period. This plan fits with recommendations from research (Burton, 1992) that family-related training be implemented through coursework in conjunction with active participation in field settings.

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TABLE 2

Plans for Making Changes in Family Involvement Training

Reasons for Not Increasing (n=19*)	%
No external pressure	47
Limited number of courses	42
Satisfaction with current level	26
Lack of funding	16
Faculty unfamiliarity	5
Lack of collaboration between areas	5
Newness of the movement	5
Preservice training ineffective	5

Reasons for Increasing (n=36*)	%
Intrinsic value	
For students, teachers, parents	47
For society	47
In general	22
Extrinsic forces	
Pressure from individuals	42
External pressure (e.g., mandates)	28
Restructuring	
Curriculum	25
Philosophy, mission	22
Specific program	19
Research	6
Multiculturalism	6
Early childhood spillover	6

*Of 60 programs surveyed, 36 planned to increase family involvement training, 19 had no plans to increase, and 5 did not respond.

CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

In addition to the survey of 60 teacher education programs, the research collected in-depth information on nine programs with substantial offerings in family involvement training. Teacher educators from these programs described the challenges to preparing teachers in family involvement at the preservice level: lack of a national technical assistance network to support model development and information dissemination; restrictive university and/or government policies; limited scale and resources of programs; and resistant attitudes from key actors. Two of the challenges — restrictive policies and limited funding — reinforced the findings of the survey data on barriers to increasing family involvement training (see Table 2).

Lack of A National Technical Assistance Network

Research revealed that no system existed to support research and model development for family involvement training at the preservice level, to act as a clearinghouse of information, or to provide technical assistance. Teacher educators pointed to a lack of successful models to follow and learn from; an absence of research on the most promising strategies for preparing teachers in this domain; and a shortage of teacher education faculty, cooperating teachers, and school administrators with the required expertise for and commitment to preparing teachers in family involvement.

This absence of models often required teacher education programs to "reinvent the wheel" when designing their curriculum. Several programs felt that it was difficult to know where to start or how to teach about family involvement in a meaningful way. Likewise, some programs might have been able to avoid difficulties that arose with supervision, debriefing, and evaluation had they known the experiences of other programs. Universities also had difficulty locating schools, administrators, and cooperating teachers who could model effective home/school/community partnerships.

Restrictive University and/or Government Policies

State and federal mandates, as well as universities themselves, place many restrictions and requirements on teacher education programs. For example, research revealed that states limited the number of education credits that could be earned, imposed academic majors on education students, and mandated various other requirements. Teacher education

programs were often required to include many topics within a limited number of courses, posing a considerable challenge to program restructuring and the integration of family involvement into the curriculum.

Limited Scale and Resources

Teacher education programs often lack the human and financial resources to implement comprehensive training in family involvement. The research showed that faculty members' numerous responsibilities often limited the amount of time they could devote to a focus on family involvement. This lack of time was particularly noted when only one or two faculty members were responsible for teaching, supervising, and coordinating their programs. These factors suggest that a strong number of faculty is needed to sustain a family involvement training program. Collaborations, such as those among faculty for curriculum development or those among university, school, and human service personnel to arrange field experiences, can be labor intensive and time consuming. Programs also faced limited funding, especially when implementing field-based instruction that required participation from school teachers. "All we can do is say 'thank you'," one faculty member said of the inability to offer stipends to teacher instructors. External funding from federal or private grants supplemented a few programs, but such funding is often scarce and competitive. Extra money was needed to provide stipends for cooperating school teachers, who can be difficult to recruit and retain if no compensation is available.

Resistant Attitudes

The negative attitudes frequently held by faculty members, cooperating teachers, school administrators, and preservice teachers were also cited as barriers to preparing teachers in family involvement. Some respondents reported that, at times, schools had "blaming" attitudes toward families or a "We're the experts" approach to family involvement. Some faculty members resisted addressing family involvement because they placed a higher priority on teaching core academic subjects.

III. NEW SKILLS FOR NEW SCHOOLS

Over the past 50 years, the nature of family involvement has evolved from a narrowly defined concept into a much broader set of ideas. The traditional view of "parent involvement" includes activities that often are unidirectional (parents give something to the school); exclusive (only a small, "privileged" group of parents participate); and narrow in focus (centering mainly on children's achievement). Newer concepts focus on developing mutual partnerships, involving all families, and recognizing a range of types of family involvement. This is reflected in the change from "parent involvement" to "family involvement," the latter indicating that all family members, including the extended family, contribute to children's learning and school improvement. Also, families — as contexts of human development — and not just children, deserve support and participation in educational matters. These changes imply that teacher preparation must reflect a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of family involvement than it did in the past.

The framework presented in this section illustrates the range of training for family involvement. It emerged from a review of the parent and family involvement literature, an analysis of state certification, and a survey of teacher education programs. While other typologies of family involvement have been created (Epstein, 1992), they consist of actual types of family involvement activities carried out in schools. The framework, illustrated in Table 3, differs from such typologies in its focus on the attitudes, skills, and knowledge that teachers need to work effectively with parents. For example, "General Family Knowledge," in this framework, is not a *type* of family involvement per se, but an area of *knowledge* that teachers need in order to work with parents.

By providing a range of types of training, the framework overcomes the fragmentation in the way in which students learn about family involvement. Content knowledge is enhanced when presented in a progressive and integrated manner. The framework begins with general knowledge about family contributions to child development and school achievement, and then builds toward specialized knowledge such as ways in which schools can support families and families can support schools. These latter activities point to the need as well for new schools that enable teachers to practice their new skills. Family involvement is more

likely to occur when school policies encourage it and school administrators support and reward teachers for their efforts.

The framework recognizes several approaches to training in family involvement, which can be used alone or in combination. Four major approaches illustrate the kinds of attitudes, knowledge, and skills that teachers can acquire to increase their effectiveness with families. The approaches include: (1) a functional approach that describes the roles and responsibilities of teachers and parents in promoting student achievement; (2) a parent empowerment approach based on the strengths of disenfranchised families; (3) a cultural competence approach that makes the school an inclusive, respectful setting where diversity is welcomed; and (4) a social capital approach that builds community support for education.

Table 3 identifies the different content areas and their goals. Table 4 indicates which programs illustrate each content area of the framework. These tables are followed by a brief description of each content area, a table that details the attitudes, knowledge, and skills embodied in each of the four approaches identified above, and profiles of model programs that illustrate each content area.

The nine programs that illustrate the framework were chosen from the survey or were nominated by survey respondents. Therefore, these programs may not represent the universe of exemplary programs. However, each program in this sample met three criteria: they commonly focused on family involvement as an important area for preservice preparation; they engaged student teachers in hands-on activities; and they promoted a broad concept of family involvement that recognizes family strengths, the need for family support, and the importance of home-school collaboration. Notably, the programs tended to demonstrate knowledge, skill development, and experiences in several content areas, as well as innovative methods of delivery.

TABLE 3

Family Involvement Framework for Teacher Training

Type	Goals
General Family Involvement	To provide general information on the goals of, benefits of, and barriers to family involvement. To promote knowledge of, skills in, and positive attitudes toward involving parents.
General Family Knowledge	To promote knowledge of different families' cultural beliefs, childrearing practices, structures, and living environments. To promote an awareness of and respect for different backgrounds and lifestyles.
Home-School Communication	To provide various techniques and strategies to improve two-way communication between home and school (and/or parent and teacher).
Family Involvement in Learning Activities	To provide information on how to involve parents in their children's learning outside of the classroom.
Families Supporting Schools	To provide information on ways to involve parents in helping the school, both within and outside the classroom.
Schools Supporting Families	To examine how schools can support families' social, educational, and social service needs through parent education programs, parent centers, and referrals to other community or social services.
Families as Change Agents	To introduce ways to support and involve parents and families in decision making, action research, child advocacy, parent and teacher training, and development of policy, programs, and curriculum.

TABLE 4

Teacher Training Institutions Applying Family Involvement Framework

Type	Teacher Training Institutions
General Family Involvement	Trinity College, University of Arizona, Indiana University Northwest
General Family Knowledge	Trinity College, Northern Arizona University, University of Wisconsin, California State University (Fresno)
Home-School Communication	Vanderbilt University-Peabody College, University of Arizona, University of Houston at Clear Lake
Family Involvement in Learning Activities	Vanderbilt University-Peabody College, California State University (Fresno), University of Georgia (Athens), University of Houston at Clear Lake
Families Supporting Schools	University of Arizona, Indiana University Northwest, University of Wisconsin (Madison)
Schools Supporting Families	Trinity College, University of Houston at Clear Lake, University of Georgia (Athens), Indiana University Northwest
Families as Change Agents	Northern Arizona University, Indiana University Northwest

GENERAL FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Family involvement efforts are most successful when teachers and schools assume that all parents want to do their best for their children and can make important contributions to their children's education. Teachers need to understand the benefits of and barriers to family involvement. Teacher preparation can equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to encourage participation from parents, especially those who may seem difficult to involve.

By taking an approach that identifies and builds on family strengths and resources, teachers can build on the wealth of knowledge, experience, and skills that parents possess. Parents feel valued when teachers work in partnership with them. They gain confidence in their ability to contribute to their children's schooling, and as a result, they are more likely to become involved in their children's education.

Trinity College
Burlington, Vermont

Both the early childhood and elementary preservice teacher education programs at Trinity College in Burlington, Vermont, integrate family involvement throughout coursework. At Trinity College, a small, Catholic institution whose commitment to family involvement originated primarily from a focus on special education, special education inclusion continues to be a primary theme. The programs concentrate on encouraging preservice students to respect and understand families, their individual situations, and the stresses that they face.

In the early childhood program, seven required courses have a family involvement component. An optional course, a required workshop, student teaching, and a field experience also have a family involvement component. Preservice teachers attend guest lectures by parents who discuss issues related to parenting, finding appropriate child care, raising a child with special needs, and making the difficult transitions involved in sending a child to public school.

Faculty who teach courses in social work present lectures on family dynamics and related concerns, and a special educator talks about how Individual Family Service Plans are developed with families. Prospective teachers interview parents and other family members about issues pertinent to early childhood. They also interview their own families for an understanding of the ways in which their family experiences have influenced them as teachers. For example, when addressing the subject of

social development, preservice students consider their own social development: they examine the many influences in their lives that have contributed to their work with children and families.

The program also includes a special community service element through which student volunteers provide tutoring, respite care, and child care, and at the same time, gain experience working directly with families. "Students come to college with a lot of baggage, and this [program] helps them on their personal and professional journey to becoming a teacher," observes Marilyn Richardson, director and faculty member. "The first semester is a lot of perspective taking, analyzing who they are, and getting information about children along the way."

TABLE 5

Attitudes, Knowledge, and Skills for Teachers Based on Four Approaches

Type of Training: General Family Involvement*

Functional Approach	Parent Empowerment
Attitude that all teachers should learn skills and sensitivity in dealing with parents Knowledge about the goals and benefits of family involvement and also the barriers to it Skills in involving parents of all backgrounds in school Knowledge of the role of school administration in promoting or preventing family involvement	Attitude that all parents want what is best for their children and that all parents want to be good parents Attitude that parents are children's first and most important teachers Attitude of respect for the role of the family in the nurturance and education of children Attitude that the most useful knowledge about rearing children can be found within the community
Cultural Competence	**Social Capital**
Knowledge that minority and low-SES students benefit academically from family involvement Skills in using culturally appropriate themes in the curriculum	Knowledge of the idea of social capital and parental investment in their children's learning

*The approaches are based on the work of the following authors: Joyce Epstein (functional); Moncrieff Cochran (parent empowerment); Luis Moll (cultural competence); and James Coleman (social capital).

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GENERAL FAMILY KNOWLEDGE

Understanding the many influences in the lives of children — both inside and outside the classroom — can enrich teacher efforts to develop a curriculum that is meaningful and relevant to student learning. Learning about the families of the children in their classrooms can also prepare teachers to enlist the participation of parents and other family members in encouraging and supervising their children's education. A number of factors can prevent teachers and family members from developing a strong working relationship, however. Increasingly, changing demographics have widened the gap between teachers' and families' economic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. These gaps may strain or limit communication between teachers and parents. Economically disadvantaged and minority parents, in particular, face many obstacles to becoming involved in schools. These individuals frequently face language and literacy barriers, have no access to transportation to and from schools, have no experience in asking teachers and other school staff questions, and fear attending school events at night if they live in dangerous neighborhoods. Teachers may have difficulty overcoming these obstacles or reaching out to parents who have backgrounds different from their own. Teacher preparation can provide knowledge and understanding of families and offer teachers learning experiences that bridge the worlds of home and school.

Rural Special Education Project
Northern Arizona University
Flagstaff, Arizona

The Rural Special Education Project is a small, innovative program whose goal is to prepare teachers to work with Navajo students with special needs, a very underserved population. The Rural Special Education Project is part of Northern Arizona University's (NAU) teacher education program, which places approximately 800 student teachers in schools each year. Through the experience of cultural immersion, up to ten special education teachers participating in the Rural Special Education Project on the Navajo reservation in Kayenta, Arizona, learn to work with Navajo families and other members of Navajo communities.

Participants in the program have many opportunities to learn about Navajo culture and language. They live on the reservation for the academic year and take courses on site with an NAU professor. Each of these preservice teachers is also paired with a Navajo teacher aide who has been a student in the program. These teacher aides are paid a stipend to help the NAU student teachers adapt to the community and learn

about Navajo culture. Each month, the teacher aides bring participants to various cultural events and activities, such as a Navajo wedding, that involve the entire community. Participants must also attend all school board meetings, where they can observe community decision making in action.

Teachers for Diversity Program
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin

Community field experiences are a key component of the Teachers for Diversity Program, a graduate certification program that prepares teachers to work successfully in diverse communities with elementary students whose backgrounds differ from their own. A subprogram within the teacher education program at the University Wisconsin at Madison, Teachers for Diversity admits approximately 25 graduate students each year to participate in the 15-month program.

The program is field-based and collaborates with four elementary schools that have diverse student populations. At least one-third of the faculty members in each of the schools must be willing to collaborate with the University. Before starting the program, faculty meet with various segments of the community, including the superintendent and members of the teachers' unions and two community-based organizations — Centro Hispano and the South Madison Neighborhood Center — to introduce themselves and explain what they hope to achieve.

At the beginning of their first semester, all students are placed in a community setting. Approximately seven students are placed together at the same site so that they are not isolated from one another. During the academic year, they are in the schools 15 hours each week, tutoring and/or leading small group or whole class activities. While working in the schools, these preservice teachers also attend seminars given by University of Wisconsin faculty associates (Gloria Ladson-Billings, Mary Louise Gomez, and Kenneth Zeichner) who spend several days a week on site. Preservice teachers spend an additional five hours each week in a community setting.

In addition to attending the University seminars during the fall semester, the preservice teachers return to the University in the late afternoon or evening for additional classes. In the spring semester, they complete their full-time student teaching requirement at these schools. The following summer, they finish foundations coursework in educational policy studies and educational psychology, and complete a master's paper. This

nontraditional course sequence offers a unique opportunity for connecting direct experiences with educational theory.

Students in the program learn about family involvement by working directly with community members whose children attend local schools. One assignment, for example, asks the preservice teachers to obtain information about a child's health and physical and social development from the child's family members and from community service providers familiar with the child. In this way, the program promotes the idea that parents and other family members, as well as family professionals, are valuable resources to teachers and schools.

TABLE 6

Attitudes, Knowledge, and Skills for Teachers Based on Four Approaches

Type of Training: General Family Knowledge*

Functional Approach	Parent Empowerment
Knowledge of different cultural beliefs, lifestyles, childrearing practices, family structures, and living environments Attitude of respect for different backgrounds and lifestyles Knowledge of the functions of families	Attitude of support toward parents, focused on strengths rather than deficits Knowledge of power differences among groups in society Knowledge of the history of disenfranchised groups Knowledge of the effects of a family's disadvantaged status on its interactions with teachers or other professionals Knowledge of how families interact with schools and similar institutions
Cultural Competence	**Social Capital**
Knowledge about cultural influences on discipline, learning, and childrearing practices Knowledge of personal assumptions, belief systems, and prejudices that can affect relationships with family and community Skills in understanding and reversing negative stereotypes of parents, families, and community members	Knowledge that schools and homes have different norms and values, and that such differences influence partnerships between home and school Knowledge of common values that span different cultures and institutions Skills in conflict negotiation and consensus building

* The approaches are based on the work of the following authors: Joyce Epstein (functional); Moncrieff Cochran (parent empowerment); Luis Moll (cultural competence); and James Coleman (social capital).

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HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Effective communication between parents and teachers can strengthen parent involvement in a child's education. Through open and honest communication, parents and teachers begin to understand one another's ideas about learning, discipline, and other topics. Such communication helps parents and teachers to work together to improve an individual child's performance and to contribute to schoolwide policies which benefit all students in the school. Teacher preparation can equip teachers with the skills to improve two-way communication between home and school, especially when difficult and sensitive issues have to be discussed.

Early Childhood Education Program
Peabody College, Vanderbilt University
Nashville, Tennessee

"Most teacher education programs get students to the point where they can start teaching," says Professor Jerold Bauch, who teaches a course entitled "Parents and Their Developing Children" at Peabody College at Vanderbilt University. "The Peabody Program gets students to the point where they can start interacting with parents as well. This allows them to begin family involvement in a proactive, rather than reactive manner."

Professor Bauch's semester-long course enrolls more than 50 students each semester. The course is designed to be very practical, giving preservice teachers substantial practice with specific strategies that can be used in their future classrooms. For example, guest speakers, including a home-school coordinator and a human development counseling specialist, offer relevant information from the field. Throughout the course, preservice teachers prepare for home/school/community partnerships by:

- developing specific strategies to use in their student teaching to involve parents
- discussing dilemmas involving parents
- simulating parent-teacher conferences
- practicing writing newsletters and press releases
- writing scripts for voice mail

Graduates who have taken the course have applied their new skills in the classroom in numerous ways. Some of them have scanned photos of themselves into letters to parents at the beginning of the school year to help personalize their introductions. Three graduates continued their interest in parent involvement by completing master's degrees to become

home-school coordinators in the Nashville community's early childhood programs.

"When teachers are not prepared in family involvement," Bauch asserts, "it is unlikely that they will initiate comprehensive or innovative programs in their schools."

TABLE 7

Attitudes, Knowledge, and Skills for Teachers Based on Four Approaches

Type of Training: Communication Between Home and School*

Functional Approach	Parent Empowerment
Skills in effective interpersonal communication Communication skills to deal with defensive behaviors, distrust, hostility, and frustrated parents Skills in using active listening and effective communication to understand families and to build trust and cooperation	Skills in effective interpersonal communication Skills in treating parents as equal partners Knowledge of the importance of positive communication with parents, even when the child is having problems Attitude that parents should not be controlled, but rather that their views and needs should be understood
Cultural Competence	**Social Capital**
Knowledge of the importance and logistics of obtaining translators for families who do not read or speak English Knowledge of the styles of communication of different cultural groups	Skills in communicating expectations and values in order to build a sense of trust among members in the community Skills in communicating with parents in a way that models how values will be transmitted between other members of society (parent-child, teacher-child, or parent-parent) Skills in being attentive, persistent, and dependable over time in relationships with families, thereby showing genuine caring toward families

* The approaches are based on the work of the following authors: Joyce Epstein (functional); Moncrieff Cochran (parent empowerment); Luis Moll (cultural competence); and James Coleman (social capital).

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Teacher preparation can equip teachers with the skills to develop two-way learning between home and school. Teachers can promote family involvement in children's learning and development by acting as facilitators rather than experts. They can recommend activities that help parents promote their children's learning, including reading to their children, creating a physical setting conducive to study, and showing an interest in their children's schoolwork. Equally importantly, teachers can learn from parents — about childrearing practices and family skills and resources — and tailor suggestions for involvement activities to meet the individual circumstances of each family.

The Parent Power Project
California State University, Fresno
Fresno, California

Since 1985, the Parent Power Project at California State University, Fresno, has been preparing teachers to work effectively, sensitively, and confidently with families, particularly families whose children have learning difficulties. This goal is achieved, in part, by matching preservice teachers with families in the community. Preservice and inservice teachers in regular and special education, as well as students in counseling and administration, enroll in a three-unit graduate-level course that fulfills a requirement for several credentials and professional licenses.

After an introduction to the course and a discussion of family issues, participants are matched with families with whom they carry out projects and activities for ten weeks. Activities include interviewing a family, reviewing school records with the family, conducting diagnostic teaching on the child, and modeling successful teaching strategies for family members. Participants must also write weekly progress reports and a final summary for the classroom teacher, lead a weekly parent discussion group and a children's self-esteem group, and compile a resource notebook with parents.

Beginning in the 13th week of the semester, participants expand on what they have learned during their work with the families. They complete school surveys and design family involvement programs to implement in their current or future job situations. Many participants complete master's theses on some aspect of family involvement, which they then use to build programs serving families. Master's students must disseminate the information from their theses at conferences, staff development institutes, faculty inservice programs, and university classes.

Evaluation data collected from parents, teachers, and Parent Power teachers reveal improvement in grades and classroom behavior as well as eased tensions at home because of involvement in the project. "It is very gratifying to watch my students grow to the point that they can make their own contribution to the field," says Deanna Evans-Schilling, program founder and director. "There are numerous spin-off projects, and some students are entering doctoral programs to pursue their interest in family involvement. Many say the course is the most useful one they have taken." In 1992, the Project was awarded the Christa McAuliffe Showcase Award for innovative curricula in teacher preparation programs.

Alternative Teacher Education Program
University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia

The topic of family involvement is addressed throughout the Alternative Teacher Education Program at the University of Georgia (UGA). Questions and assignments about families and schools emerge during school internships that are required for preservice teachers during each of the four quarters of the program.

The program prepares preservice teachers in family involvement by providing lists of possible experiences during their internships, suggesting questions for their journal observations, and asking questions about family involvement. The program also explores teachers' attitudes and beliefs about working with families. Students engage in self-reflection about their own cultural background and experience, complete readings on family involvement research, and participate in role playing of parent-teacher communications.

Students organize themselves into cooperative groups to explore research and readings on a wide range of topics in the area of family involvement such as "Involving Parents in Assessment," "African American Parent Perspectives on Schooling," and "Helping Parents Understand Reform." Each group develops a chapter for a Teacher Resource Guide on Family Involvement, designed to guide first-year teachers' work with families.

Martha Allexsaht-Snider asserts that through collaboration with University colleagues, teachers in the partnership schools have become very active in research and inquiry in their own classrooms. Family involvement has been the focus of several teacher research projects, and the program has linked preservice students with these teachers. Graduates of the program who have continued to conduct action research

in family involvement have returned to UGA as mentors and guest speakers in preservice education courses.

Another intensive course related to families and schools has been developed as a component in the Prekindergarten-Second Grade Emphasis Program. Students in the course develop resource packets for teachers. The packets are based on interviews and presentations by community agency representatives who collaborate with teachers to strengthen family, school, and community linkages. In their field placement, students develop a parent project in which they meet with a classroom teacher and parent to provide resources for family involvement in a child's learning. Students also plan and carry out lessons for elementary children, focusing specifically on family and community themes.

TABLE 8

Attitudes, Knowledge, and Skills for Teachers Based on Four Approaches

Type of Training: Family Involvement in Learning Activities*

Functional Approach	Parent Empowerment
Skills in involving parents in their children's learning outside of the classroom Skills in sharing teaching skills with parents	Skills in developing activities that build parents' confidence and facility in conducting home learning activities with their children Skills in providing constructive feedback
Cultural Competence	**Social Capital**
Skills to incorporate family "funds of knowledge" into homework projects, so that families and communities can contribute to children's learning	Skills in motivating family involvement in home-learning activities Skills in home visiting Skills in fostering community participation in educational activities

* The approaches are based on the work of the following authors: Joyce Epstein (functional); Moncrieff Cochran (parent empowerment); Luis Moll (cultural competence); and James Coleman (social capital).

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FAMILIES SUPPORTING SCHOOLS

When parents and the community as a whole support schools, schools gain a vast network of resources. Parents and communities can cultivate the values and ethos to support education. According to James Coleman, private schools are more successful than public schools because they have higher levels of "social capital." Social capital consists of families' and schools' shared expectations and goals, which are reinforced through social interactions between children and adults. Communities high in social capital provide strong social networks and trusting relationships that give individuals access to a wide array of resources ranging from childrearing advice to assistance in times of crisis (Putnam, 1993).

Preparing teachers to involve families in their children's schooling can help teachers to understand families, communicate with them, negotiate differences, and build consensus. This training enables teachers to participate in forums for parents, teachers, and other citizens to establish collective support for learning and student achievement. Teachers also develop the skills to involve parents and other family members as resources for the school.

Funds of Knowledge Project
The University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona

The Funds of Knowledge Project, a joint venture between the school of education and the anthropology department at the University of Arizona, trains experienced teachers to use ethnographic methods to explore "funds of knowledge" in their students' households. Two goals of this inservice program are: (1) to change the relationship between home and school by drawing on the family's strengths; and (2) to have the teacher learn about the family's funds of knowledge so that this information can supplement classroom curriculum. Faculty are discussing the possibility of incorporating this material at the preservice level.

Currently, participating teachers go into all types of households, including English- and Spanish-speaking, low-income and middle-income, and so forth. After visiting the households of two or three of their students and interviewing the families, the teachers participate in study groups to analyze their findings collectively. Teachers then form curriculum units that reflect what they have learned from their household visits and study groups, integrating this knowledge into their classroom lessons and activities.

Teachers have learned to conduct interviews under a wide range of circumstances, and to take advantage of every opportunity to investigate funds of knowledge, whether they are walking down the hall or are participating in a field trip. They also learn to focus on the strengths of the individuals whom they encounter through their work. In addition, as Norma Gonzalez notes, "New avenues of communication between school and home have been constructed in a way that fosters *confianza*, or mutual trust."

TABLE 9

Attitudes, Knowledge, and Skills for Teachers Based on Four Approaches

Type of Training: Families Supporting Schools*

Functional Approach	Parent Empowerment
Skills in involving parents in the school and the classroom	Skills in making parents feel valued by inviting them to contribute their expertise in the classroom and in the school
Cultural Competence	**Social Capital**
Knowledge of the financial and time restraints of low-SES, single and/or working parents Skills in creating opportunities for parent involvement in school Skills in discovering different potential contributions of parents, and inviting them as guest speakers, translators, and organizers of cultural events	Skills in fostering parents' investment in their children in school, through volunteering, attendance at school events, and fundraising Skills in utilizing resources of other community groups Skills in building reciprocal exchanges between school and home

* The approaches are based on the work of the following authors: Joyce Epstein (functional); Moncrieff Cochran (parent empowerment); Luis Moll (cultural competence); and James Coleman (social capital).

SCHOOLS SUPPORTING FAMILIES

Schools support families by providing opportunities to strengthen parenting skills, enhance parent networks, and minimize the stresses of parenting. Increasingly, teachers deal with students and families challenged by poverty. Such stressful circumstances can inhibit effective parenting practices, and as a result, have negative effects on children's development and school achievement. Although teachers should not be held responsible for meeting the needs of such families directly, they can learn to understand the connections between poverty, family functioning, and childrearing. They can be trained to work in "full-service schools" that are providing families additional support services such as health and mental health care, adult education, and social services.

Parent Education Model
University of Houston at Clear Lake
Houston, Texas

At the University of Houston at Clear Lake, in Houston, teachers learn about parents, in part, by teaching parent education classes and conducting their own research. The program began as an inservice bilingual teacher training program after a 1985 assessment was conducted on the need for bilingual teachers and outreach to parents with limited English skills. A large survey of parents concluded that ESL was a main concern for Hispanic parents in the community. Based on the survey results and a review of the literature, a teacher education course was created that combined four weeks of coursework with nine weeks of field experience preparing prospective teachers to teach ESL in the schools to parents needing assistance in English instruction. Parents also expressed a desire to learn other skills, including how to help their children with homework, how to write checks, and how to fill out job applications. These skills were incorporated into the ESL classes.

The parental involvement model at the University of Houston at Clear Lake has since expanded to include training for teachers in regular programs. Expansions have included a six-hour master's course, developed with Title VII funding, that instructs teachers on how to conduct research. Students then compile a book of abstracts describing their research projects with parents and families.

Future projects may include compiling case studies that portray different parents and teachers affected by the program, and developing a certification program for Mexican immigrant parents and other adults in

the community to provide them English skills and prepare them as teachers' aides in the schools.

The program is dynamic and changes yearly, but always maintains a focus on the following: (1) the primary responsibility of schools to initiate contact with parents, who often regard school as a place where authority is never questioned; (2) teacher leadership; (3) parent education; and (4) multiple definitions of family involvement that range from getting children dressed and ready for school to PTA membership and representation for other parents.

Finally, pre- and post-test surveys over the first three years of this program have revealed positive changes in the attitudes of parents, teachers, and children. In addition, informal talks with graduates of the program reveal that they implement the skills learned in the program and extend this knowledge even further. Some graduates have become home-school coordinators, and others have started their own programs. Both the process and outcome evaluations of the program have been widely disseminated (for example, at the American Education Research Association's annual conference led by Joyce Epstein).

TABLE 10

Attitudes, Knowledge, and Skills for Teachers Based on Four Approaches

Type of Training: Schools Supporting Families*

Functional Approach	Parent Empowerment
Knowledge of how schools can support families' social and educational needs Knowledge about processes of consultation and communication Knowledge of the roles of various specialists and of interprofessional collaboration Skills in referral procedures	Knowledge of and skills in promoting parent empowerment through adult education and parenting courses Knowledge of and skills in ameliorating parents' basic needs as a first step to helping them help their children academically Skills in incorporating parents' self-identified needs into parent programs and school activities
Cultural Competence	**Social Capital**
Knowledge of resources for cultural minorities Skills in creating opportunities for parents with different backgrounds to learn from one another Sensitive attitude toward different groups' perceptions of school "help" and reciprocity Skills in incorporating parent preferences into parent programs and school involvement activities	Skills in identifying the expectations and goals of families Knowledge of how school social events can create social capital Skills in building reciprocal exchanges between school and home

* The approaches are based on the work of the following authors: Joyce Epstein (functional); Moncrieff Cochran (parent empowerment); Luis Moll (cultural competence); and James Coleman (social capital).

FAMILIES AS CHANGE AGENTS

Schools and teachers can promote informed decision making among families by treating them with care and respect, and by offering them opportunities for critical reflection and participation. The range of decision making is broad and includes such diverse activities as promoting an individual child's learning, improving school facilities and programs, and implementing school reform. Teachers can be prepared to support and involve parents and families in various types of decision making. Such preparation should focus on helping teachers to develop and understand the principles of an empowerment approach. It should also involve their acquiring skills in managing group dynamics, problem-solving, and conflict resolution.

Urban Teacher Education Program
Indiana University Northwest
Gary, Indiana

The Urban Teacher Education Program (UTEP) at Indiana University Northwest, in Gary, aims to improve urban education by increasing the number of minority teachers and the number of teachers who can successfully work in urban settings. The program utilizes Professional Development Centers (PDCs) to educate both undergraduate and graduate students in three urban settings: an elementary school in Gary, a middle school in Hammond, and a high school in East Chicago.

PDCs involve a collaboration between universities and schools or parts of schools. Courses and field experiences are coordinated by professors and paid teacher instructors. Teacher instructors deliver seminars at the school and negotiate syllabi with professors teaching courses.

One major concern addressed by UTEP is how teachers in urban settings can work effectively with urban parents, many of whom are reluctant to be involved in the life of the school. Traditionally, many urban parents have had negative experiences with teachers and schools, both as students and as parents. Many have been contacted by schools only when their children are having problems, and consequently lack confidence or become defensive when relating to teachers. UTEP prepares teachers to overcome these barriers by building relationships with urban parents and involving them in the schools.

One unique aspect of UTEP is the involvement of parents in the design of the teacher education program. For example, each PDC has a parent liaison. Also, a parent advisory board designs the community experience

component of the program, which includes a tour of major service agencies in the community. This community experience component has recently been integrated into existing courses. For example, students in the Psychology of Teaching course participate in a 21-hour placement in a community service agency, such as a library, urban league, or community center with a tutoring program. Some students, in fact, choose to spend more time in their community placement than required.

The parent advisory board has also sponsored a school-based workshop entitled "Through the Eyes of the Child," which brought community professionals together with school staff, parents, and UTEP students. A doctor, social worker, school nurse, hospital representative, juvenile law enforcement agent, and Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program representative participated in the workshop, along with members of the religious community, parents, teachers, teacher aides, and counselors.

TABLE 11

Attitudes, Knowledge, and Skills for Teachers Based on Four Approaches

Type of Training: Families as Change Agents*

Functional Approach	Parent Empowerment
Skills in supporting and involving parents as decision makers; action researchers; advocates; policy, program, and curriculum developers; and parent and teacher trainers Skills in sharing information to help parents make decisions Skills in sharing leadership with and transferring it to parents Skills in interacting with parents on an equal footing	Skills in promoting political empowerment for parents through: • Advocating shared decision making in schools • Informing parents of governance roles in the school • Recruiting parents to sit on boards and councils • Preventing parents' voices from being overridden in meetings
Cultural Competence	**Social Capital**
Skills in encouraging all parents to run for seats on school councils Knowledge of importance of providing translators at school council meetings Knowledge of the importance of having teachers from various cultures be present on councils to make all parents feel welcome	Attitude that shared decision making is an essential ingredient to establishing and maintaining a common set of core values Skills in negotiating differences and conflicting opinions Skills in involving parents in design of curriculum that represents shared values Skill in co-development of mission statement in council meetings that represents shared values

* The approaches are based on the work of the following authors: Joyce Epstein (functional); Moncrieff Cochran (parent empowerment); Luis Moll (cultural competence); and James Coleman (social capital).

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IV. PROMISING METHODS FOR TEACHER PREPARATION

No one method of instruction can prepare teachers to work effectively with families and communities. Instead, approaches must be comprehensive, integrated, and varied. While the general picture that emerges from the survey of teacher education programs indicates that traditional modes of instruction prevail, the study of nine programs suggests promising innovations in teaching methods. Table 12 illustrates these teaching and learning methods in relation to the framework for teacher preparation in family involvement.

The nine programs shared common innovative practices. These practices focused on developing prospective teachers' problem-solving skills by exposing them to challenging situations which required them to negotiate sensitive issues. The programs also provided them with opportunities to work in schools and communities — often under the guidance of experienced professionals — where they were able to gain valuable communication and interpersonal skills, especially when dealing with families with very different backgrounds from their own. These community experiences also gave them the opportunity to develop collaborative skills with professionals from other disciplines. In addition, the programs emphasized the application of research skills to develop a better understanding of families and communities. They encouraged the use of information about families to develop family involvement activities and to create supplemental materials for classroom use.

These programs utilized guest speakers, role play, the case method, community experiences, research with families and communities, self-reflection, and interprofessional education.

TABLE 12

Teaching Methods

Type	Method
General Family Involvement	Guest speakers (Peabody College) Research with families and communities (Trinity College) Community experiences (Trinity College)
General Family Knowledge	Self-reflection (Trinity College) Case method (Trinity College) Cultural immersion (Northern Arizona University) Community experiences (Indiana University Northwest)
Home-School Communication	Research with families and communities (University of Arizona) Role play (Peabody College, University of Georgia)
Family Involvement in Learning Activities	Community experiences (California State University, Fresno) Research with families and communities (California State University, Fresno) Self-reflection (University of Georgia)
Families Supporting Schools	Research with families and communities (The University of Arizona, University of Wisconsin)
Schools Supporting Families	Research with families and communities (University of Houston at Clear Lake) Community experiences (University of Georgia)
Families as Change Agents	Interprofessional collaboration (Trinity College) Community experiences (Indiana University Northwest)

Guest Speakers. Attending guest lectures and discussions led by parents, practicing teachers, experts from other disciplines, or co-instructors in teacher education courses provides prospective teachers opportunities to learn from and interact with key players in children's education. Program faculty and researchers alike attested to the benefits of drawing upon the expertise of parents, school personnel, and faculty in other disciplines to enrich teacher preparation.

Examples of Guest Speakers

- Program graduates, who researched family involvement during their own teacher preparation programs, talked about what they had learned from their projects and how they had applied that knowledge to their first weeks of teaching.
- A parent-school coordinator, parents with special needs children, social work faculty, and special educators described how Individual Family Service Plans are developed with families. A home-school coordinator spoke to prospective teachers about her work and discussed ways in which teachers could promote family involvement.
- A human development counseling specialist presented a parent effectiveness training model and discussed skills to use in parent-teacher conferences.

Role Play. Role play requires students to act out situations that they might face when working with parents. Role play gives prospective teachers simulated experience in communicating, handling difficult or threatening situations, and resolving conflict. By dramatizing situations, prospective teachers become emotionally engaged and learn in a "hands-on" manner about the situations that they will face in their classrooms.

Because role play usually takes place in the university classroom, teacher educators can analyze their students' reactions and responses, and peers can give feedback. By alternately playing the roles of teacher and parent, prospective teachers can gain a better understanding of each perspective.

Examples of Role Play Scenarios

- Negotiating differences of opinion with a parent
- Communicating with a parent about his or her child's poor performance or behavior
- Conducting a parent-teacher conference
- Discussing a student portfolio with a parent
- Explaining a new curriculum to a parent
- Talking with a parent who is angry or upset

Case Method. In the case method, prospective teachers read about dilemmas or ambiguous situations that could arise in working with parents. After reading the cases, these students analyze and discuss them, referring to their own relevant experiences and to the theories and principles covered in class.

Because the case method approach encourages prospective teachers to examine many possible responses to a particular situation, and to evaluate the merits and drawbacks of each of these responses, they are able to understand the complexities of home-school relationships. Students' analyses of these situations help them develop crucial problem-solving skills. The case method also offers students the opportunity to integrate their beliefs with known theories as they respond to complex and problematic, real-life situations (Hochberg, 1993).

Examples of the Case Method

- One program used a case study example in which a young girl in a program for migrant workers had difficulty being understood because she always held her hand over her mouth when she spoke. A month into the program, the girl's teacher met the mother and discovered that she also spoke with her hand in front of her mouth, to hide the fact that she had no teeth. This case demonstrated that the child's communication problems were the result of her modeling her mother's behavior. The class looked at this case from multiple perspectives. The goal was for students to avoid jumping to conclusions or making assumptions about children or families.
- Another program presented a case in which a parent and teacher had different agendas for a parent-teacher conference. To analyze the case, students wrote a 15-page response to the parent, drawing from one of the developmental frameworks presented in class. Responses were read aloud to classmates acting in the role of the parent, who then gave feedback from that perspective.

Cultural Immersion. One way to learn about children from diverse ethnic backgrounds is to live as they do. Cultural immersion is especially helpful when the teaching force and student body come from different cultural and/or economic backgrounds.

Examples of Cultural Immersion

- In a former program at Clark Atlanta University, prospective teachers, along with social work students, had the option of living in

housing projects with the children and families whom they would one day serve.

- At Northern Arizona University, prospective teachers in special education can live and student teach on a Navajo reservation.

Community Experiences. During placement in community settings, such as human service agencies, children's homes, and community centers, prospective teachers can learn about services in the community and form relationships with family and community members in a nonschool context.

In programs that prepare teachers to work in urban schools or in communities with linguistic and cultural diversity, community experiences tend to be emphasized. These experiences allow prospective teachers to see children in a variety of settings, become more visible in the community, and understand children's sociocultural contexts.

Examples of Community Experience

- At UTEP, the community experience component was designed by parents who were asked what they thought teachers should know about their children's community. The experience began with a tour of major service agencies in the community, including libraries, urban leagues, and community centers with educational components.
- Community experiences can also include helping families and communities. Working in a neighborhood center, teaching ESL to parents, and providing weekend respite care for a family with a disabled child are some of the numerous ways in which prospective teachers are able to assist families and communities.
- The "Parent Buddy Project" arranges for prospective teachers to visit a family's home several times a semester. Sometimes "buddies" will offer to babysit so that parents can go to PTA meetings. In this way, the project not only helps prospective teachers learn about family life, it also helps parents become more involved with their children's education.

Research with Families and Communities. Research with families and communities can range from parent surveys to in-depth ethnographic interviews with families. This method offers teachers the opportunity to understand issues from the perspective of families and communities and to utilize their expertise and insight. Teachers can learn from and interact with families of different cultural and economic backgrounds as they conduct their research.

According to one program respondent, this method sends the message: "I want to get to know you," rather than "I'm here to teach you something."

Examples of Research Projects with Families and Communities

Prospective teachers have:

- developed a parent questionnaire or entrance inventory after working with at least five parents of children with special needs and written a summary of findings
- interviewed their own parents about their respective childhood experiences
- interviewed families who had a child with special needs. The prospective teachers then reflected on what they had learned from the family and on the implications for working with children.
- conducted ethnographic interviews in children's homes to gather and document household knowledge. The information collected was then used to develop lesson plans.
- "shadowed" a child to gather information about the child's health, physical education, and social development and asked parents and family and community members for information
- produced a book of research abstracts based on the prospective teachers' research with parents.

Self-Reflection. Self-reflection techniques include journal writing and other assignments that ask teachers to think about their own family backgrounds, their assumptions about other families, and their attitudes toward working with families. The goal is for prospective teachers to consider how their own perspectives will influence their work with families, especially those very different from their own.

Self-reflection can be combined with other methods used to teach family involvement. It helps teachers process what they are learning and make the experiences personally meaningful. Self-reflection is also useful for addressing cultural differences. Finally, this method helps prospective teachers uncover any negative feelings and assumptions that they might have which may inhibit them from building positive relationships between home and school.

Assignments for Self-Reflection

- When discussing social development, prospective teachers in one program reflect on their own social development and on the ways in which their teachers influenced them. This introspection helps

prospective teachers examine their own beliefs and learn how these beliefs might influence their future work with families.

- One faculty member teaches about issues of power in society (gender and minority status, for example) by asking students to analyze their own cultural perspectives (such as their cultural history, language, and literacy).
- In one program, prospective teachers are asked to look at their own cultural experiences and history, think about the match between their family community culture and their school culture, and then discuss ways in which some children's home and school cultures differ.

Interprofessional Education. Interprofessional education is a new trend in preparing human service professionals. Schools of nursing, social work, and other disciplines join with schools of education to prepare teachers and other professionals working with children and families. The purpose of this strategy is to train a range of human service professionals to work more closely with one another, to work in an increasingly collaborative environment, and to deliver services more effectively to families by placing them at the center of the human service system.

Examples of Interprofessional Education

- One program unites a school of education and an anthropology department to find new ways of working with families.
- Another program brings teachers, administrators, and counselors together in an intensive family involvement training experience.

Comprehensive interprofessional training programs have the potential to prepare teachers and other human service professionals to work effectively with families. For example, teachers involved in such training programs will be better prepared to identify children's and families' nonacademic support needs and refer them to appropriate outside agencies and personnel. Promising models are currently being developed at Ohio State University, the University of Washington in Seattle, and Miami University in Ohio.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Teacher education can and should prepare teachers to build partnerships with families and communities. Building the capacity of teacher education programs to create excellence in this new field will involve substantial changes in policy and practice. The research suggests the following recommendations.

1. Develop a national network to support teacher preparation in family involvement.

Findings from teacher education programs indicate a near-total absence of information about creating programs for preparing teachers in family involvement. A clear need exists for an entity that would model development and evaluation, work with professional organizations to develop standards, and disseminate information. This entity could also serve as a repository of innovative teaching materials such as case studies. It would create a "case bank" which keeps an inventory of cases, supports new case development, and helps educators gain access to them. These technical assistance and dissemination functions may be assumed by a consortium of teacher training institutions, professional teacher and school administrator organizations, and parent associations. Such a network of key institutions can spearhead changes that, in turn, create a ripple effect throughout the education system.

Since 1991, the annual Family Involvement in Education conference in Utah, organized by the state Office of Education and the state PTA, has brought together specialists from across the country and over 900 parents, educators, and community and business representatives to assess and discuss options for teacher education in family involvement (Utah Center for Families in Education).

2. Evaluate the experiences and outcomes of preparing teachers to work with families.

More research is needed on effective practices for preparing teachers to work with families and communities. Research is needed to examine the effects of teacher preparation on teachers' practices, relationships between teachers and families, and parents' perceptions of their relationships with teachers. Ultimately, evaluation must consider how teacher and parent outcomes of teacher preparation are

tied to student outcomes. How does comprehensive teacher preparation in family involvement influence the types of family involvement activities that, in turn, contribute to academic and behavioral outcomes for children? Only when such information is gathered and shared will it be possible to bring about change in a meaningful way. Overall efforts should be made at the school and district levels to assess and evaluate data, including teacher and other school personnel practices and self-assessments. For example, the development of tools for teacher self-assessment could uncover outcomes of their work and improve their practice. Self-assessment tools could be developed by schools and incorporated into school surveys and data collections.

An evaluation of the Parent Education Model at the University of Houston at Clear Lake showed that both teacher and parent perspectives on family involvement improved after a family involvement training experience (Bermudez & Padron, 1988).

3. Strengthen state policy guidelines for teacher preparation in family involvement.

States currently mention family involvement in certification requirements only in general terms. A clear and comprehensive definition of family involvement can guide teacher education programs, while still allowing them flexibility in how, where, and when to teach family involvement.

Early childhood teacher certification requirements in California specify that early education work must include "an environment which encourages cooperation and collaboration on the part of the children, educators, family, and community" and "an understanding of changing family patterns and their societal implications."

4. Make training available to elementary, middle, and high school teachers.

Results of this study demonstrate that early childhood educators receive more preservice training than elementary, middle, and high school teachers. This coincides with findings that family involvement in schools declines dramatically with each passing grade, especially in the middle grades and in high school (e.g., Epstein, 1992; Epstein, 1986; Stevenson & Baker, 1987). This is unfortunate, particularly since family involvement continues to have a positive impact on

student achievement at elementary (Epstein, 1987; Epstein, 1991) *and* secondary levels (Keith, Reimers, Fehramm, Pottebaum, & Aubey, 1986, in Bempechat, 1990). Across the board — in certification, teacher education programs, and schools — family involvement declines as grade levels increase. State departments of education and teacher education programs should consider providing more training in this area for all preservice teachers.

Family involvement training at the Parent Power Project at California State University, Fresno, moves beyond an early childhood or elementary education focus by selecting students from a variety of backgrounds and fields, including elementary and secondary education, special education, counseling, and administration (Evans-Schilling, 1996).

5. Improve the effectiveness of training through collaboration across subspecialties and disciplines.

Collaboration is a promising strategy that can be used to improve the quality and quantity of family involvement training through shared information, resources, and activities. Reform efforts at state and university levels should include collaborations across teaching subspecialties, such as early childhood and special education, and collaboration with other professional schools, such as schools of social work and public health.

Certain teacher education subspecialties may be a rich source of information for other teacher education programs that wish to improve family involvement training. For example, early childhood programs emphasize family involvement training more than elementary or secondary programs. Also, special education may already have successful programs and strategies for teaching about family involvement.

Collaboration with fields of health and social services is considered an effective approach to preparing teachers for their expanded roles in family involvement (Bucci & Reitzammer, 1992). Faculty in social work, home economics, and other departments who are knowledgeable about family related issues can help with planning teacher education curriculum. This type of collaboration also addresses the challenge of training in small-scale education departments with few faculty to organize family involvement training activities.

At the University of Washington in Seattle, the College of Education and the graduate schools of Nursing, Public Affairs, Public Health and Community Medicine, and Social Work have formed the Training for Interprofessional Collaboration Project to prepare students – including prospective teachers – for integrated, family- and community-centered human services.

6. Integrate training throughout teacher preparation curriculum rather than treating it as an isolated component.

Teacher education programs fault state departments of education for requiring too much of them, while restricting the maximum number of course units allowed. The overload of demands mentioned by teacher education programs is similar to the overload of responsibilities experienced by many teachers, who find their attempts to involve parents hindered by other teaching demands (Cohen & Ooms, 1993; Education Commission of States, 1988, cited in The New Futures Institute, 1989, p.16). Because of these demands, family involvement and family involvement training are often viewed as low priority issues in public schools and in university teaching programs, regardless of the potential benefits (Krasnow, 1990). One way to overcome the state limitations on coursework is to integrate the family involvement theme throughout the curricula, rather than adding additional courses.

At Trinity College in Burlington, Vermont, family involvement is addressed throughout coursework and field experiences rather than in a single isolated course. In the early childhood program, a family involvement component is part of seven required courses, an optional course, and student teaching and other field experiences.

7. Espouse family involvement as a priority among professional organizations.

Teacher education programs are challenged by resistant attitudes from faculty members, school administrators, and teachers. Strategies to effect attitudinal change will involve multiple, reinforcing efforts. An absence of pressure from external groups, such as professional organizations, is a common barrier to increasing family involvement training in teacher education programs. Professional organizations, such as the National Parent Teacher Association and the American Association of College Teacher Educators, play a critical role

in signaling priority areas, establishing national standards, and taking the lead in developing innovative training models.

The National Parent Teacher Association (1997) stresses family involvement as an organizational goal, as evidenced by its recent set of national standards for parent/family involvement programs. More than 30 other organizations, including the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and the American Federation of Teachers, have agreed to uphold these standards.

8. Sustain teachers' knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes toward families through inservice training.

Inservice training for teachers and administrators also deserves support. In order to sustain preservice efforts, professional development opportunities for teachers must be ongoing. Inservice training expands what has been learned at the preservice level so that teachers can adapt and maintain their skills. It also provides a core of cooperating teachers to model good relationships with families for prospective teachers.

The induction year in particular, may be an important target point for teaching family involvement. Beginning teachers in Houston and Williamson's study (1990) felt unprepared to encourage family involvement; this lack of preparation in family involvement may add to the overall negative attitudes of first-year teachers (Swick & McKnight, 1989).

Supporters of teacher training for family involvement need to emphasize the benefits of family partnerships for schools and teachers. Teachers, who are often overworked and face many unrealistic demands, need to know how family involvement can benefit rather than burden them. Teaching is more rewarding and successful when teachers have mutually supportive relationships with families and communities. This must be conveyed in any training effort.

At the Funds of Knowledge Project at the University of Arizona in Tucson, inservice teachers are trained as ethnographers. Teachers visit their students' homes to investigate the family life and culture of their students, and later incorporate this knowledge into the classroom curriculum.

9. Move beyond classroom-based teaching methods by offering teachers direct field experiences working with families.

The survey of teacher education programs shows that family involvement training is rarely interactive, depending mostly on lectures, readings, and other traditional teaching methods. Experiential methods enable students to integrate theory and practice. The direct experience of working with families and communities builds student skills, increases knowledge gained from practice, and helps promote positive attitudes between students and families. Ideally, teacher education programs should offer field experiences that include (1) assignments or discussions that allow prospective teachers to process their experience and consider how it will influence their future work with families; (2) a close link to university coursework and theory on family involvement; and (3) a knowledgeable and supportive cooperating teacher who models good skills in working with families.

School-university collaborations can help bridge the gap between theory and practice. School personnel can collaborate with teacher education programs to reshape teacher education curriculum so that teachers are better prepared to meet the changing needs of students and families.

At the Rural Special Education Project at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, prospective teachers in special education receive direct experience working with families and communities through cultural immersion: they live and student teach on a Navajo reservation for one academic year.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

RESEARCH METHODS

In 1991, the Harvard Family Research Project began to study the extent to which preservice teacher education included information on parent and family involvement. Furthermore, the study examined the content and methods that programs used to prepare teachers for work with parents and families. Both early childhood and K-12 teacher education programs were examined.

The research targeted preservice teacher education programs (as opposed to inservice education) because the vast majority of teachers in the United States are certified through approved, undergraduate teacher education programs (Roth & Pipho, 1990). Making changes at the preservice level would therefore reach the greatest number of future teachers.

The study had several components. In the first stage, the team reviewed state teacher certification requirements and identified states that mandated teachers to obtain skills and knowledge related to parent and family involvement. From this information, they selected two teacher education programs from 22 states and collected information on content and methods. For the final stage, researchers conducted case studies of selected programs.

State certification. Almost all states develop teacher certification requirements and have program approval standards. Most also require that teachers graduate from a state-approved program to receive certification to teach in the public schools (Clark & McNergney, 1990). Therefore, the research reviewed teacher certification materials (for both early childhood and K-12 teachers) from the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The review documented any mention of parent involvement, families, and related topics. Twenty-two states met this criterion.

Two researchers coded this information according to seven categories: General Parent Involvement; General Family Knowledge; Home-School Communication; Parents Helping Children Learn at Home; Families Supporting Schools (e.g., Volunteering); Schools Supporting Families (e.g., After-school programs, social service related assistance); and Parent Decision Making. After the initial coding, the researchers compared their results, discussed differences in coding (85% agreement), and then resolved any disagreements to achieve coding consistency.

Survey of teacher education programs. The survey of teacher education programs included at least two programs from each of the 22 states that were identified as having certification requirements that related to parent involvement.

The selection of these programs was based on two criteria: (1) each program was a state-approved, undergraduate program that prepared teachers for either the early childhood and/or K-12 level (as listed in

the 1991 NASDTEC Manual); and (2) the program was among those that granted the largest number of bachelor's degrees in education for the 1990-1991 academic year (as listed by the National Center for Education Statistics). This resulted in 26 early childhood programs and 34 K-12 programs. Some universities had both early childhood and K-12 programs, and thus were surveyed twice in the study.

To identify an appropriate faculty member or administrator to participate in the study, researchers sent letters to the deans of education at each institution. The letter described the study and noted that a researcher would be calling within a week to request the name of a person at the school of education who would be most appropriate to participate in the study. During these follow-up telephone calls, researchers answered the deans' questions about the study, recorded contact information about the selected respondent (in most cases a faculty member), and asked the deans to inform the respondents that they would be receiving a survey in the near future.

As respondents were identified, researchers mailed the surveys with a cover letter explaining the study. The respondent was asked to collect the information using the survey forms, after which the information would be taken over the telephone. This strategy permitted the researchers to explain any ambiguities in the survey and maximize the accuracy and amount of information received from respondents. The letter also mentioned that the interviewers would ask some open-ended questions at the end of the survey. The respondent was asked to set aside 30 minutes to an hour to participate in the study, and to expect a phone call to set up an interview time. Repeated follow-up phone calls to respondents resulted in a final sample of 58 teacher education programs (25 early childhood and 33 K-12 programs), with a response rate of 96.7 percent. Only one respondent did not participate in the study. Because this person had been asked to give information about both the early childhood and K-12 programs, the research team was unable to obtain data for two programs, both of which were at the same institution.

After the interview was scheduled, a researcher called the respondent to collect the survey information and conduct open-ended questions. The researcher wrote down all survey information and interview data on a series of data collection forms. The respondent was thanked for participating in the study and was sent a thank you letter. After the study was completed and preliminary results were obtained, the respondent was also sent a copy of the study results.

During the phone interview, researchers collected program information for the 1991-1992 academic year. Program information included information about the respondent (e.g., academic background, number of years at the university, and current area of focus); general program information (e.g., demographics of student body, number of students in program, and areas of concentration offered); ways in which the program met state certification requirements in parent involvement; ways in which parent involvement was addressed in the curriculum (e.g., coursework, workshops, seminars, student teaching, and field experiences); and any plans to increase, decrease, or maintain the level of parent involvement training over the following five years.

The information was summarized into three areas: (1) types of parent involvement training offered; (2) methods used to teach parent involvement; and (3) places in which parent involvement is taught (e.g., required coursework, field experiences, optional workshops, etc.). T-tests were conducted to determine if there were significant differences between early childhood and K-12 programs in these three areas. Finally,

researchers performed a content analysis on responses to the open-ended questions about each program's plan for parent involvement training over the following five years.

Case studies. In 1994, the research team selected nine teacher education programs for more in-depth cases studies. Programs were identified from the original survey and from nominations by key informants who were involved in research in parent involvement and teacher education. These programs met four criteria. Each program: (1) focused on family involvement as part of the preservice curriculum; (2) adopted new methods about teaching and learning about family involvement (focusing on a hands-on rather than a traditional lecture approach); (3) promoted progressive approaches to family involvement (e.g., focusing on family strengths, incorporating family support, and stressing strong collaborations between home and school); and (4) demonstrated a focus on several areas of parent involvement, rather than just one narrow focus.

To develop these cases, respondents for these nine programs were interviewed by telephone. The research team also examined syllabi and course materials from each program.

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